

REMARKS

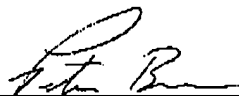
Applicants thank the Examiner for extending the courtesy of an interview and for his suggestions regarding claim amendments.

Claims 1-3, 5-12, 14-19, and 21-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,324,273 to Alcott ("Alcott") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,219,700 to Panizzon et al. ("Panizzon"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. However, to expedite prosecution in the present application, claims have been amended to better define the invention, in accord with the interview with the Examiner. Amended independent claims 1, 9, 10, and 17 recite upgrading a portion of the telecommunication network which serves the first party. Support for this amendment may be found at various places in the specification, including for instance, page 8, lines 17-25.

The Alcott and Panizzon references do not, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest at least the feature of upgrading a portion of the telecommunication network which serves the first party. Therefore, Applicants submit that amended claims 1, 9, 10, and 17, and claims that either directly or indirectly depend from them, distinguish over Alcott in view of Panizzon. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claims 1-3, 5-12, 14-19, and 21-26 be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and speedy allowance of the present application. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (312) 222-8101 if there are any outstanding issues that could be resolved through a telephone conference.

Respectfully submitted,



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